

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 00848 251638Z
ACTION CU-03

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E.O. 11152: N/A
TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, NI
SUBJECT: U.S. DILEMMA AT FESTAC

1. NAZ TRIUMVIRATE SPRIGGS, SANDLER AND KING MET THIS MORNING WITH AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY/USIS PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS IMPLICATIONS OF FUNDS-RAISING FAILURE FOR AMERICAN ROLE IN REMAINING EIGHTEEN DAYS OF FESTAC. SPRIGGS HAD JUST SPOKEN WITH DONALDSON, WHO SAID NO MORE MONEY, NO SECOND AIRPLANE, AND ALL PARTICIPANTS AND EXHIBITS WOULD HAVE TO RETURN US ON CHARTER FLIGHT PICKING THEM UP IN LAGOS FRIDAY 28TH.

2; WE ASKED SPRIGGS WHY EXHIBITS (PAINTINGS, SCULPTURE, PHOTOGRAPHS, ETC.) WHICH OPEN TO PUBLIC ONLY SINCE SUNDAY, COULD NOT STAY BEHIND. THESE AMERICAN EXHIBITS ARE EXCEPTIONALLY IMPRESSIVE PART OF OVERALL EXPOSITION AND ATTRACTED SPECIAL ATTENTION FROM OBADANJO WHEN HE TOURED THE SHOW AT FORMAL OPENING TWO DAYS AGO. SPRIGGS SAID FESTAC AUTHORITIES HAD NEVER PROVIDED ADEQUATE INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS, HENCE AMERICAN EXHIBITS WOULD HAVE TO RETURN TO US ON CHARTERED FLIGHT. WE QUESTIONED THIS LOGIC, ASKING WHETHER SEVERAL NAZ PERSONNEL COULD NOT ADEQUATELY SUPERVISE AMERICAN EXHIBITS THROUGHOUT REMAINDER OF FESTIVAL AND HANDLE SHIPPING MATERIALS BACK HOME AFTERWARDS. SPRIGGS REPLIED CATEGORICALLY THAT WITHOUT A SECOND PLANELOAD OF NAZ PARTICIPANTS FOR THE FESTIVAL, THE ART WORKS MUST GO BACK WITH THE FRIDAY CHARTER. WE SUGGEST
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 00848 251638Z

DEPARTMENT URGENTLY EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES WITH DONALDSON.

3. SPRIGGS REPORTED THAT DONALDSON FIGURED \$65,000 COULD SAVE THE DAY. WITH THIS AMOUNT OF MONEY IN HAND TO ASSURE THEIR RETURN TO THE US AT THE END OF THE FESTIVAL, A SECOND BATCH OF NAZ-SELECTED PARTICIPANTS COULD BE PUT ON BOARD THE PLANE COMING TO LAGOS

FOR THE 28TH PICKUP. TO OUR QUESTION WHETHER IN FACT A CREDIBLE OR SUBSTANTIAL DELEGATION OF AMERICAN TALENT COULD STILL BE ROUNDED UP ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE, SPRIGGS AND KING SAID THEY WERE CONFIDENT DONALDSON COULD GET THEM TOGETHER.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT SOME ADDITIONAL AMERICAN PRESENCE IN PERFORMING ARTS FIELD DURING SECOND HALF OF FESTIVAL WOULD BE IN US INTEREST PROVIDED IT COULD BE OBTAINED AT MODEST COST. SUCH PRESENCE WOULD BE EXPECIALLY WELCOME AND USEFUL IF IT COULD BE TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH CONGRESSMAN YOUNG'S PRESENCE HERE. AS PRE-CONDITION FOR ANY US COMMITMENT OF FUNDS FOR SUCH PURPOSE, WE WOULD INSIST THAT FESTAC AUTHORITIES CONFIRM DATE(S) AND APPROPRIATE VENUE FOR SUCH PERFORMANCE(S). WHILE WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT DONALDSON'S FIGURE OF \$65,000 REPRESENTS, WE SHOULD THINK THAT OBJECTIVE WE HAVE IN MIND COULD BE MET AT CONSIDERABLY LESS EXPENSE. WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH MODERN DANCERS, GOSPEL SINGERS AND DRAMA. WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND IS A BIG NAME GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL, PREFERERABLY OF FLASHY AND SPECTACULAR NATURE.
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